

Christian standpoint, are unbelievers are believers in various directions, in various things, persons and institutions. The man who believes that the Bible is a book of superstitious sayings, fabulous stories and unreasonable doctrines and declarations is thereby hindered from receiving any light, blessing and encouragement from it. He who believes that Christ was a mere man, and that his death was only an example, designed to exert a moral influence upon mankind, hinders himself from receiving Christ as the Savior of his soul.

He who believes that a sinner cannot become a Christian until he has been immersed is hindered from accepting the truth which stands opposed to that falsehood.

The man who believes that the death of Christ will finally save all men, regardless of moral condition, is hindered from receiving the truth that if one shall die in his sins he will be eternally lost, that he will be consigned forever to the world of moral darkness. No one can believe in universal salvation without hindering himself from seeing truths which are of the very greatest importance to all human beings. When one believes with all his heart certain gross errors which lie directly opposite those truths that are of the most vital character he hinders himself with an awful power. And I accept it as being a fact that the devil is intensely anxious to have every unconverted person a believer, a most firm and continuous believer, in all that is untrue, unscriptural and unsafe. Let them be such believers and they will do more to hinder themselves than the devil himself can directly hinder them. O, the power and liberty to believe is a terrible power, if it have free expression in wrong directions.

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM

S. S. C. SPICKERMAN

For something over two years we have heard a great deal about patriotism. It has been a favorite theme of the press, the platform, the stage and the pulpit. Inspired by the troubles with Spain, the patriotism of the day has been mostly of a warlike character. The common idea of patriotism seems to be the war spirit, whether its animus be love of country, ambition for military glory, desire for revenge, greed for territory and other plunder, or the love of killing for its own sake—whatever is warlike is patriotic, and nothing is patriotic that is not warlike. A patriotic song, poem, or sermon, is one that deals with war, or extols the valor of military or naval heroes.

If this is the real meaning of patriotism, then patriotism is incompatible with Christianity. Jesus teaches us to love our enemies; to do good to those who hate us; to overcome evil with good, and to do to others as we would that they should do to us; all of which is contrary to the world's idea of patriotism.

Webster defines patriotism as "love of country." We can love our country and not hate Spain or any other nation. To love

our country it is not necessary to seek to enrich her by another nation's misfortune, or to honor her by another nation's downfall.

The true patriot will seek by every just means to advance the prosperity of his country—materially, intellectually and morally. This is not only consistent with Christianity, but it is the duty of every Christian. We are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. True, this is not limited to our own countrymen; but if a man does not love his neighbors of his own land and race, he is not likely to love those who are not. The Spanish idea of patriotism is to glorify the nation by military exploits and enrich it with the plunder of conquered peoples; the Christian idea is to make the nation prosperous, intelligent and pure.

A man may be a great warrior and not a patriot; or he may be a true patriot and have nothing to do with war. Benedict Arnold was one of the most gallant soldiers in the American army. His expedition up the Kennebec, his attack on Quebec, and his gallant conduct at Saratoga, challenge the admiration of all who read them. Had he not afterward shown his real character, he would have been regarded as one of the noblest patriots of his time; but he proved to the world that he was no patriot at all.

On the other hand, the poet Whittier was a Quaker, and utterly opposed to war, yet there is no writer whose works breathe a purer and loftier patriotism than his.

Our savage ancestors regarded war as the noblest pursuit in which men could engage; and in spite of several hundred years of Gospel light, people still cling to that notion. A man, or woman, may risk life, and endure the greatest hardships for humanity's sake, in any other field of action but war, and the people pay little attention to him; but let some military hero show himself and they all turn out to honor him. Suppose that Miss Clara Barton should visit one of our cities and a public reception be given her; that the same week, in the same city, a reception should be given to an officer who had won a victory in the Philippines; which would be more largely attended? No doubt many professed Christians would swell the crowd at the soldier's reception who would not think it worth while to attend a demonstration in honor of a hero or a heroine who had only been saving life, instead of destroying it.

Many of the churches, instead of opposing this perverted idea of patriotism, follow the crowd, and echo its cry for blood. The preachers preach militarism, and the choirs sing it. Sunday-schools teach the children war songs, some of which contain more revenge than patriotism. Sunday-school papers contain war stories, calculated to inspire military ambition. All this would not seem so strange in the state churches of Europe where the rulers control the teachings of the church in the interest of their own selfish plans, but why should the churches of free America lend themselves to the promotion of this great evil?

How, then, can we, who wrestle not with flesh and blood, whose weapons are not carnal, serve our country? First, by attending to our private, individual duties. We can increase her material wealth by working diligently at some honest business; keeping out of debt; supporting those who may be dependent on us; paying our taxes and helping those who are in need. We can make the nation more intelligent by educating ourselves and those who are under our care; and we can advance her moral welfare by living pure lives; for the nation is made up of individuals.

Second, each one of us has an influence for good or evil, and that influence, however small, is working for or against the welfare of the nation.

Those who are voters have an important duty to perform in that capacity. The powers that be are ordained of God. Rom. 13: 1. In this country God has ordained the people as rulers. The president, governors, legislators, etc., do not rule in our own right, but as our representatives. We are truly "the powers that be" as any king or emperor, and we are neglecting a duty of God's appointment if we fail to exercise that power.

Above all, we can help our country by spreading the gospel of Christ. Happy is that people whose God is the Lord. Psa. 144: 15. Gladstone said to one who came to interview him concerning the great questions of the day, "There is but one great question of the day, and that is the Gospel." The principles of the Gospel applied to our individual and national life, will be a better protection to our country than all the battleships, shells and explosives that ever were or will be invented.

Marysville, Mo.

Home Circle

Hymn For a Child

God gave me a little light
To carry as I go;
Bade me keep it clear and bright,
Shining high and low.
Bear it steadfast, without fear,
Shed its radiance far and near,
Make the path before me clear
With its friendly glow.

God gave me a little song
To sing upon my way;
Rough may be the road, and long,
Dark may be the day;
Yet a little bird can wing,
Yet a little flower can spring,
Yet a little child can sing,
Make the whole world gay.

God gave me a little heart
To love what'er He made;
He gave me strength to bear my part,
Glad and unafraid.
Thru Thy world, so fair, so bright,
Father, guide my steps aright!
Thou my song and Thou my light,
So my trust is stayed.

—Laura E. Richards in *Youth's Companion*.

As iron put into the fire loseth its rust, and becometh all bright like fire, so he that turneth himself unto God is purified from all sin and changed into the likeness of God — *Thomas a Kempis*.